

97. *Ceratrachia? stellata*, Mab.

♂, Rabai, 7th June, 1900.

It has been suggested by Dr. Holland that my *C. punctulata* may be a variety of this species; but I think, if he could compare the two, he would alter this, I will not say *opinion*—for he does not speak with decision,—but perhaps *view* would be the word to use. *C. punctulata* is a more robust species, without chequered but with spotted fringes, and with no ochreous colouring below; the spots on the under surface are chalky white without dark borders and the veins are whitish.

IV.—A Contribution to the History of Plagyodus (Steller).

By Dr. A. GÜNTHER, F.R.S.

IN the March number of this Journal for 1867 I showed that the remarkable oceanic fish which Lowe described in 1833 under the name of *Alepisaurus* had already been known to Steller (ca. 1745), who named it *Plagyodus*. Steller gave a perfectly recognizable description of it, which was published by Pallas in vol. iii. of the 'Zoographia Rosso-Asiatica' (1811)*.

However, even Steller was not the first observer who has obtained and taken notice of this interesting type. William Funnell, who served as mate on Captain Dampier's Expedition into the South Seas in the years 1703-4, gives a description and figure of it in his account of that enterprise ('A Voyage round the World': London, 1707. 8°). He says on page 6:—"On October the 22d (being in the Latitude of 6 d. 36 m. N. and Longitude from London W. about 19 d. 57 m.) we caught four fish; a Shark, a Dolphin, a Jelly-fish and an Old-wife." He then proceeds to describe these fishes, the passage referring to the Jelly-fish (p. 8) running as follows:—"The *Jelly-fish* (see fig. III.) was about fourteen inches long, and about 2 inches deep; with a

* Messrs. Jordan and Evermann (Fish. N. & M. Amer. i. p. 594) call it "a brief description"; it occupies a page of this journal, and, what is more, it is very much to the point. I have no desire to discuss the question whether *Plagyodus*, which in due form was introduced into zoological literature by Pallas, should supersede *Alepisaurus*, or whether it should be discarded, because (as is pretended) names formed by Steller are to be estimated as "monomial designations" rather than generic terms!

very sharp set of teeth, a very curious sparkling eye, a long extended mouth, a monstrous high Fin on its back, being of a slimy substance, only the Ribs which stretched it out (being thirty-two in number) were firm and stiff. He had one small fin under his jaw, of the same slimy substance. That part of him which is without small spots, is a perfect green *Jelly*, whence he was called by us a *Jelly-fish*. The rest of him was firm, of a Silver colour, with small spots, and streaks or partings, as is express in the Figure."

The figure itself, rude as it is, as might be expected from a mariner of that time, leaves no doubt as to the nature of the fish. Whether it was drawn from the specimen at the time of its capture, or at a later period from recollection, is matter of conjecture. It is evident that Funnell, when the Dutch authorities at Amboyna took possession of all the private effects of the ship's company, found means to preserve the notes which he had made during the voyage, and without which he would not have been able to write the account published after his return to England. They probably included a sketch of the fish, but it seems to me that the description was drawn up at a later period, from the sketch and from memory. Both figure and description are much too inaccurate to draw from them any conclusion as to the species to which Funnell's specimen belonged. This, however, is immaterial; Goode and Bean (*Ocean. Ichth.* p. 117) express themselves as not thoroughly satisfied that more than one species has been found in the Atlantic.

V.—*Notes on Bats of the Genus Nyctinomus found in Africa, &c.* By W. E. DE WINTON.

THE working out of the species of *Nyctinomus* in connexion with Dr. Anderson's 'Fauna of Egypt' has necessitated looking through the whole of the specimens of this genus contained in the collection of the British Museum. In several instances the determination arrived at by Dobson in his 'Catalogue of the Chiroptera' has been found to require amendment, and the examination of the skulls has brought out additional facts of importance. This communication is confined only to those species, found principally on the continent of Africa and the island of Madagascar, which have the ears joined or rising close together from the centre line of the face, and does not deal with that section of the genus with